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Provisional

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Thursday, 20 July 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Robertson	(Jamaica)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cappagli
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Keita
	Namibia	Mr. Gurirab
	Netherlands	Mr. Scheffers
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchynski
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts.

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00-54275 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Norway, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria), Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia), Mr. Oratmangun (Indonesia), Mr. Akasaka (Japan), Mr. Kolby (Norway), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Sun Joun-Yung (Republic of Korea), Mr. Ka (Senegal), Mr. Semakula-Kiwanuka (Uganda) and Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: We should all be grateful to you, Mr. President, and to your country's admirable Permanent Representative for convening this second open debate of the Security Council on conflict prevention.

Interest in this subject is on the rise — and with good reason. In the last decade alone, 5 million people lost their lives in wars — mainly internal ones — and great suffering was inflicted on countless others, most of them civilians. We struggle to relieve the suffering and to resolve the conflicts. But everyone agrees that it would be far better to prevent them.

We can do better. Indeed, the Charter requires us to do better. In Article 1, paragraph 1, the founding fathers made it one of the primary purposes of the Organization

> "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace".

It is high time we gave prevention the primacy, in all our work, that those words imply.

But how? There is by now a consensus that prevention strategies must address the root causes of conflicts, not simply their violent symptoms. It is also widely understood that, since no two wars are alike, no single prevention strategy will be effective everywhere. There is no panacea.

Prevention is multidimensional. It is not just a matter of putting in place mechanisms such as early warning, diplomacy, disarmament, preventive deployment or sanctions — necessary though all these may be, at one time or another. Effective prevention has to address the structural faults that predispose a society to conflict.

A recent study by the United Nations University suggests that simple inequality between rich and poor is not enough to cause violent conflict. What is highly explosive is what the authors of the study call "horizontal" inequality: when power and resources are not equally distributed between groups that are also differentiated in other ways — for instance, by race, religion or language. So-called ethnic conflicts occur between groups which are distinct in one or more of these ways, when one of them feels it is being discriminated against, or another enjoys privileges which it fears to lose.

Increasingly, therefore, we see that democracy, human rights, good governance, justice and the rule of law are not rewards to be claimed at the end of the development process, but essential ingredients of development itself. While we do not see poverty alone as a sufficient cause of conflict, we consider it no accident that the majority of wars today are fought among the poor. Social despair provides fertile soil for

conflict, especially when irrigated with undemocratic governance and violations of human rights.

As I have said before, the best form of long-term conflict prevention is healthy and balanced economic development. Since peace and development are the two great responsibilities of the United Nations, that gives this Organization a special role to play.

Since taking office, I have attempted in various ways to adapt the Organization to play that role.

The Department of Political Affairs, which I have designated as the focal point for conflict prevention within the United Nations system, has set up a Prevention Team that meets regularly to identify situations where United Nations preventive action could help. Other United Nations departments and agencies have taken similar measures to strengthen their preventive capacity.

I have established a Framework for Coordination to improve interdepartmental and interagency links. We are working more closely with regional organizations. More than 400 staff from throughout the system have gone through a new training course in prevention and early warning organized by the United Nations Staff College in Turin.

I intend to continue to strengthen the information-gathering and analysis capacity of the Secretariat, and I look forward to a systematic exchange with members of the Council on ways to do this.

Of course, all our work in post-conflict peace-building is in fact prevention, since it is designed to prevent the resurgence of conflict in countries that have escaped from it. This can be the hardest form of prevention, since conflict invariably leaves behind it a legacy of unavenged wrongs, unassuaged grievances and unachieved ambitions.

I am pleased to note, however, that the Secretariat is not alone in taking prevention more seriously. The Council too is playing its part. A recent and striking example was its decision to ban all direct or indirect imports of unlicensed diamonds from Sierra Leone, following the similar ban imposed on diamonds from the UNITA-controlled area in Angola and the ground-breaking investigation led by Ambassador Fowler. It has also requested me to establish an expert panel on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am now in the process of doing so, and I hope this may soon enable the Council to take action to restrain such exploitation, as it has done in Angola and Sierra Leone.

I also hope that the diamond bans will from now on be more strictly enforced and that the dealers will respond by cleaning up their business. Greed may be one of the driving forces behind some of today's armed conflicts, but we are not helpless in confronting it.

In my statement at the previous open meeting on prevention, I suggested a number of steps the Council could take. They include making greater use of fact-finding missions; encouraging States to bring potential conflicts to the attention of the Council; and setting up an informal working group or a subsidiary organ to study early warning and prevention.

Let me now add a few more suggestions. I believe, in the light of recent experience, that some of the Charter's provisions relating to prevention have been underutilized. Indeed, the Council could hold periodic meetings at the foreign minister level, as provided for in Article 28, to discuss thematic or actual prevention issues.

It could also work more closely with the other principal organs of the United Nations. For instance, prevention issues could be put on the agenda of the monthly meeting between the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly. This Council might obtain useful information and other assistance from the Economic and Social Council, as envisaged in Article 65. And, under Article 96, the Council can request an advisory opinion on any legal question from the International Court of Justice. Could the Council not make greater use of the Court's capacity to move conflicts from potential battlefields to peaceful arbitration rooms?

In the same spirit, the Council could examine ways of interacting more closely with non-State actors that have expertise in prevention or can make a difference to it. Prevention cannot be achieved by States alone. Civil society, including the corporate sector, has a vital role to play in defusing or avoiding conflicts — as we saw, to take just one example, in South Africa in the 1980s.

I believe the time has come to review all these proposals, as well as those put forward by the members of the Council at this and previous debates. Let us agree on the most practical ideas and then let us act.

There is no shortage of ideas for avoiding the sort of human suffering, killings and wanton destruction that has disfigured the twentieth century. But among Governments, which hold most of the levers of prevention in their hands, there remains a worrying lack of political will, either to show political leadership when it is needed, or to commit the necessary resources.

Let me thank those Governments that have contributed generously to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action. Unfortunately, there are only seven of them — for a total of $7.4 million in three years.

Yes, prevention costs money. But intervention, relief and rebuilding broken societies and lives cost far more. We must move from declarations of intent to real leadership at the political level. Leaders must recognize the need for preventive action — sometimes even before any signs of crisis are evident. They will have to sell prevention policies to their publics, even if the costs must be borne today and the benefits do not arrive for months or even years, and even then not in tangible form. How does one quantify, or even recognize, a conflict that does not occur?

Leaders will also have to acknowledge — as increasingly I believe they do — that the international community can play a constructive role in internal situations, and that this can strengthen sovereignty rather than weaken it. And States will have to give the institutions that exist for prevention — from the United Nations to local community relations councils — the backing they so urgently need.

We must make conflict prevention the cornerstone of collective security in the twenty-first century. That will not be achieved by grand gestures or by short-term thinking. It requires us to change deeply ingrained attitudes. I trust we will have a fruitful debate on this most urgent issue, in which this Council has an essential role to play.

The President: I wish to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his introductory statement to this most important debate on the prevention of armed conflicts. His presence here today attests to the importance of this issue to the international community as it seeks to develop a culture of prevention. I again thank him for his presentation and for his recommendations for action by the Council.

I would like to acknowledge the presence at the Council table of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia and President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab. On behalf of the Council I extend a warm welcome to him.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): Thank you, Sir, for convening this public meeting on such a pertinent and vital subject for the Security Council. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his continuing efforts — demonstrated today — to strengthen the role of the United Nations in preventing armed conflict and its attendant far-reaching consequences for the international community. The United States welcomes the Security Council's decision to make the prevention of conflict a priority and sees it as our responsibility as Member States and members of this Council to address the underlying causes of conflicts in hope of preventing them.

It has been eight months since we last discussed conflict-prevention strategies in detail. We are dismayed by the almost daily reports since then of burgeoning crises. Developments in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and between Ethiopia and Eritrea, recall similar tragic events in the Balkans and East Timor. All remind us of the fragility of peace and our shared obligation to use all of the resources available to prevent and defuse conflict. As another example, we are reminded sadly that this year marks the five-year anniversary of Srebrenica. The United Nations, and in particular we members of the Security Council, must learn from these horrific events and take steps so that future generations do not suffer.

As we know too well, peacekeeping missions today have grown more and more complex — not only in scale, but also in scope and mission. Concomitantly, the resources required for successful missions, as well as their costs, have also increased. This fact alone justifies taking early and effective action to prevent the development of armed conflict. But experience also proves that there is no system as such that will get this job done. Rather, we must all bring energy, intelligence and imagination to developing the means to mitigate the tensions that breed conflict. And we must commit ourselves to early preventive action. We must not only address the consequences of such tragedies, but, more importantly, focus on the conditions that give rise to conflict. Furthermore, we need a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, one that encompasses the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of

law and equal economic opportunity — all elements of a sure path to long-term global stability and development.

The scale and complexity of recent United Nations missions, such as those in East Timor and Kosovo, and crises worldwide also underline the importance of close cooperation and coordination among United Nations organs. As we have noted before — and will continue to do — the United Nations cannot by itself get the job done. To maximize effectiveness, we must augment our use of the existing and capable resources available, in particular the regional and subregional groups in Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America that have successfully addressed local crises and helped to prevent the escalation of violence. We must enhance further the cooperation between the United Nations and regional groups. We encourage the heightened international attention to the need to take steps to prevent conflict — for example, the determination of the Organization of African Unity in pursuing a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the recently announced commitment of the G-8 to promote a "culture of prevention". We ask all nations to actively support such initiatives.

Another means of improving the United Nations ability to prevent the outbreak of conflict is through better early-warning, in order to allow the Council and the Secretary-General to identify situations before they deteriorate into armed violence. A possible means of strengthening the United Nations conflict-prevention and early-warning capacity may be to consider reinforcing the roles of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, in particular their abilities to identify hotspots and to intervene early.

We note the establishment by the Secretary-General of the Brahimi Panel on peacekeeping and peace operations and welcome his efforts to conduct a comprehensive review in this field as a contribution to efforts to strengthen the quality and speed of United Nations responses to peacekeeping challenges. Key to increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations in this regard is strengthening its capacity to recruit, train and deploy international civilian police. This is a critical element of conflict prevention, as international civilian police help indigenous civilian police forces develop the capacity to provide public security.

We also reiterate our concerns about the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and the threat their uncontrolled proliferation and destabilizing accumulations continue to pose to international peace and security.

Noting the events in Sierra Leone, we also must press forward on curbing the illicit trade of high value commodities, in particular the illicit diamond trade, used to prolong and exacerbate conflict. The United States welcomes the initiatives proposed within the United Nations framework to assess the impact of the illegal exploitation of such natural resources and also welcomes the G-8 commitment to addressing this serious problem.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to highlight the role women can play in conflict prevention and peace-building activities. We encourage the United Nations to make better use of the contributions of women in peace negotiations and operations, particularly by naming more women as special representatives of the Secretary-General and special envoys. International efforts to address mounting political, economic and humanitarian crises can be substantially strengthened by integrating women fully into all phases of the process of conflict resolution, mitigation and prevention, thus enhancing opportunities for building just and equitable societies.

As the Council continues to develop and refine the methods and means to prevent conflict, our ability to successfully undertake these preventative efforts will undoubtedly improve. Today and in the future, the United States welcomes the opportunity to work with all Council members so as to put into practice the ideas and plans we are discussing here today.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing our important debate today. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for introducing the subject in exactly the right tone.

The Council adopted a presidential statement in November on the prevention of armed conflict and the statement which you, Mr. President, will deliver today marks a further step forward, which the United Kingdom fully supports. The Council needs to continue to show real progress if we are to deliver practical results in this vital area, but that means converting our fine words into action.

Our success in this area has been partial only. Too often, Security Council intervention comes too late to prevent widespread conflict and destruction. The consequences of such failures are only too obvious: too many belligerent groups targeting the innocent and the defenceless; massive numbers of refugees forced to flee for safety; gross and systematic violations of human rights perpetrated. The primary responsibility of this Council — the maintenance of international peace and security — requires us to do better.

Today's presidential statement will have value only if it is the catalyst for a more systematic and professional approach to the prevention of conflicts. The statement sets out a number of ways in which we can achieve this step change. I should like to highlight three: the importance of the right kind of early warning and of building structures in the Secretariat to achieve this; the importance of earlier and more effective consideration of potential threats to the peace by the Security Council well before conflict is imminent; and the importance, in order to achieve this, of coordinated efforts throughout the United Nations system.

First, as to early warning, the Secretary-General needs to be given the resources he needs to make the early-warning capacity of the Secretariat effective in real life. We want the Secretariat to be able to produce clear-sighted analysis, comprehensive and integrated planning and well-resourced implementation. The initiative of the Department of Political Affairs on early warning and preventive measures is welcome. It needs now to be placed on a sound financial footing.

There also needs to be better marshalling of the Secretary-General's existing resources. Links with the competent bodies in the economic and social fields will be essential. The United Nations inter-agency Framework for Coordination is doing good work in promoting coordinated analysis and information-sharing on countries at risk of falling into conflict. This concept now has to be strengthened, under the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, to take a more systematic approach to potential conflicts in all regions of the world. And when the framework teams are agreed that a situation merits further attention, we encourage the Secretary-General to act on his convictions and to bring the matter to the Council's attention, under his prerogatives under Article 99 of the Charter.

Secondly, the Security Council has its own responsibilities. Our first objective should be to contain threats to the peace, but we often appear hamstrung in undertaking actual preventive measures well in advance of the outbreak of violence. Our capitals are wary of committing resources and we slip too easily into a focus only on the immediate causes of conflict. There are, of course, sensitivities about sovereignty when the problem lies within the borders of a State, but the prevention of serious conflict anywhere has become an international matter. The empirical evidence of this is overwhelming. It is not just a matter of subjective moral duty, but of the United Nations responsibility for peace and sustainable development. We need to make the psychological leap to addressing conflicts at their roots — their economic, social, structural and political roots, what the Secretary-General has just called "the structural faults that predispose a society to conflict".

Having made that leap, we also need to show more imagination in drawing on the box of tools at the Council's disposal to deal with potential conflict. Too often we believe that a presidential or press statement will do the trick, but too often, our finely drafted words are ignored. We have made good progress in the last year in using other instruments. Ambassador Fowler's imaginative work on implementing the sanctions against UNITA is to be applauded, and we have built on that in our approach to the current crisis in Sierra Leone. The Council has despatched missions to East Timor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kosovo. Let us continue to think imaginatively and to come up with new mechanisms that make a difference. I fully endorse the Secretary-General's call to us this morning to use the Articles of the Charter more proactively.

Thirdly, it is time now to be making a real effort to improve coordination and information flow throughout the United Nations system. The United Kingdom has just done that in its own government system by establishing a common Conflict Prevention Fund across all the ministries concerned and by establishing coordinated action in the use of it. The United Nations now needs an improved system-wide approach that will consolidate the expertise of all relevant bodies without stifling the capacity of any one of them to do the work that it does best.

I have already said that the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Framework for Coordination need to be strengthened. The Secretary-

General should be able to assert his authority throughout the United Nations system so that coordination becomes a reality. We have to ensure that our own coordination with the Economic and Social Council and the relevant United Nations agencies begins to work more naturally, and we need to forge operational links between the regional organizations and the Security Council that can bear the weight of the work we have to do together.

This week in Japan, the Group of Eight is showing us the way to a more professional approach to conflict prevention by adopting an integrated initiative on five key issues: small arms and light weapons, conflict and development, the illicit trade in diamonds, children in armed conflict, and international civil police. We in the Council need to examine their work carefully and see what lessons we can draw for the United Nations system, because the United Nations cannot afford to fall behind the game. The report which is being prepared by Ambassador Brahimi and his panel on United Nations peace operations offers a well-timed opportunity to rethink our approach in this entire area. I am sure that Ambassador Brahimi is going to set us an ambitious agenda.

Before I conclude, I want to emphasize that careful consideration of the needs of ordinary people has to be at the heart of all our conflict-prevention strategies. We have to remember that civilians, so often the tragic victims of conflict, are individuals with the same rights as the rest of us, but caught up in adverse and specific circumstances. Their particular protection needs, whether they be children, women or other more vulnerable groups, must be properly identified and met. For their sake above all, the international legal framework needs to be upheld, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines must be signed and ratified by all of us. We need to reinforce government by consent and the rule of law, and we need to take new strides to combat the proliferation of small arms and the use of child soldiers.

This concept of security for individuals should guide us in our work. It will play an intrinsic part in the wider goal of security for States. When individuals are protected and their human, economic, social, political and cultural rights are upheld, international stability is consolidated.

All of this is an ambitious agenda for the United Nations system. It means hard work on a sustained basis for all of our delegations. There is no other way for the Security Council to meet its responsibilities in the circumstances of today and tomorrow. The United Kingdom will play its own part.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): It gives us great pleasure and encouragement to see you, Mr. Minister, presiding over this meeting on the role of the Security Council in conflict prevention. My delegation expresses great appreciation for the initiative taken by the Jamaican presidency of the Council to follow up the debate on the subject, which has been high on our agenda. We thank the Secretary-General for his very focused statement this morning on conflict prevention, in which he made some very clear and concrete recommendations.

Conflict prevention is not an abstract concept. We regard conflict prevention as actions seeking the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, as per the principles and provisions contained in the United Nations Charter and international law. The prevention of armed conflicts within sovereign States requires a comprehensive set of actions addressing the root causes or sources of those conflicts. A third scenario, in which foreign countries get entangled in an intra-State conflict, represents a complex imbroglio. Such a situation is certainly avoidable if respect for the principles and provisions of the Charter can be secured. With these preliminary remarks, we propose to focus on five issues relating to conflict prevention.

First, with regard to the role of the Council in preventing inter-State conflicts, we all agree that under the Charter the Security Council has the primary responsibility in the area of peace and security. We should also agree that the Council must assume that responsibility, on time and in all situations.

When the subject was debated last November, frustration was expressed about the lack of the crucial element of political will. Bangladesh, at that time not a member of the Council, spoke about the political, humanitarian and economic imperatives of conflict prevention. We underlined the importance of political will and commitment, argued in favour of prompt and effective action and pleaded for consistency in our response to all situations.

Since last November, we have seen at least one clear case of large-scale inter-State war. No one is

denying the right of any nation to legitimate self-defence. But we are not convinced that a peaceful settlement was impossible and we do not believe that the means under Chapter VI were exhausted. Given the magnitude of the death, destruction and suffering that they entail, such wars defeat our collective pledge to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. This imposes grave moral and economic burdens on the countries and peoples concerned and on the international community as a whole.

The Council did send a mission to Asmara and Addis Ababa in a desperate attempt to prevent the war. We regret that the authorities did not agree to the Council's call for a halt to military preparations and the resumption of hostilities. There were questions on the Council's role and there were reflections on the role of the regional organization concerned. From early March, Bangladesh pleaded for immediate intervention by the Council in the situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. We failed to understand and appreciate the difficulty involved in considering the issue and in making a timely intervention. Was that the result of a failure to assess the immediacy of the impending resumption of hostilities, or a lack of political will?

Secondly, let me turn to intra-State conflicts. In most cases of internal armed conflict, there is a colonial or cold-war legacy. It goes without saying that the Powers concerned have a special role and responsibility. United Nations actions in these situations may be strengthened by the initiatives and interventions of such Powers in times of crisis as well as by their addressing the long-term causes of conflict.

We may take Srebrenica and Rwanda as specific cases. The two reports reveal the extent of the lack of political will and commitment. We hope that all of us will recognize our mistakes and assume our respective responsibilities.

The reports on Srebrenica and Rwanda also point out a number of organizational or institutional deficiencies. An effective conflict-prevention strategy will require significant improvement of the United Nations conflict-prevention capacity. Clearly, there is a need for improving the United Nations early-warning and analysis capabilities and the coordination among various departments, funds and agencies and for closer cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. We are very happy to hear from the Secretary-General this morning that the Department of Political Affairs has been designated the focal point for conflict prevention throughout the United Nations system.

Thirdly, we believe that there is an emerging consensus that durable peace can be achieved only by effectively addressing the root causes or sources of conflict. In his 1998 report on the causes of conflict in Africa, the Secretary-General identified endemic poverty, underdevelopment, undemocratic government, weak or non-existent institutions and political and economic discrimination between ethnic and religious communities as major sources of conflicts. These are within the competence of other organs and agencies of the United Nations system, including the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Development Programme in particular, and the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, regional organizations and arrangements and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The success of conflict prevention will depend largely upon effective coordination among all actors.

Bangladesh believes that democracy, the rule of law, good governance, respect for humanitarian law and human rights and sustainable development constitute the basic foundation of international peace and security. These, in our perception, are essential components of conflict prevention.

The Group of Eight, in preparation for its summit this weekend, have adopted a historic document directly relevant to the work the Council. The document, the Miyazaki Initiative for Conflict Prevention, quoted by Ambassador Greenstock earlier, deserves our support. We took forward to the effective and full implementation of the commitments made by them.

We support consideration of conflict prevention in development assistance strategies. It is also important to recognize the need to ensure a smooth transition from emergency humanitarian assistance to development in post-conflict peace-building.

In the context of long-term strategies, in building the foundations of durable peace, we should not lose focus on the peoples of the United Nations, who are the ultimate actors in matters of peace and security. As part of a long-term strategy, we would like to underline the importance of building and sustaining peace by inculcating a culture of peace.

As defined by the General Assembly resolution, a culture of peace includes tolerance, understanding, solidarity, respect for diversity and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. We stress the need for efforts by Member States, relevant bodies of the United Nations system and other international, regional and national organizations and civil society in the effective implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted by the General Assembly last September.

The fourth area on which we would like to focus, is arms control and disarmament. Apart from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, an area of major concern is the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons. Given the destabilising impact of proliferation and illicit trade in these arms, it is incumbent on the international community 'to act seriously on curbing the arms bazaar. In the specific context of some of the ongoing conflicts in Africa, it is critically important to break the nexus between diamonds and arms that sustain the wars.

The fifth and final point we would like to raise is where we go from here. In November last year, the Council decided to follow up the matter and consider convening a Security Council meeting at the level of foreign ministers during the Millennium Assembly. Given the enormous importance of conflict prevention, we would strongly support the holding of the ministerial meeting in September 2001. We are requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report containing his recommendations on conflict prevention for consideration by the proposed ministerial meeting. As I said earlier, this morning the Secretary-General has provided some very clear and concrete recommendations, particularly with regard to the meeting at the foreign-minister level, the coordination between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the role of non-State actors. We hope that the Council will be acting on those. We also welcome the setting up by the Secretary-General of this panel led by Ambassador Brahimi, and we hope that its recommendations will focus on the conflict prevention aspect as well.

To conclude, let me underline that a reformed, strengthened and effective United Nations remains central to the maintenance of peace and security, of which prevention is a key component. The effective discharge of the responsibilities would require enhancing the capacity of the Organization in preventive action, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace-building.

The role of women in conflict prevention and peacemaking needs to be increasingly recognised, and we are pleased that Bangladesh's proposal on this aspect has been included in the presidential statement to be adopted later.

The success in reaching common grounds on conflict prevention in the text of a presidential statement marks an important step forward. It has been our pleasure to be able to make a constructive contribution to the exercise undertaken at your initiative, Mr. President. Bangladesh is fully behind the substance and spirit of the statement.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me and the Jamaican presidency.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, Mr. President, to begin by commending you for the excellent and timely initiative taken by your delegation of having us once again consider the question of the prevention of armed conflict. Allow me also, through you, to convey my delegation's thanks for the presence of the Secretary-General and for his statement, which yet again will serve to enlighten and inspire our debate.

Armed conflicts not only kill people, they also destroy a country's infrastructure, squander resources and change people's lives, especially those of women and children, critically affecting health and education. Hence the need to prevent them.

It is clear that in order to prevent conflicts, we have to understand the causes from which they sprang. Of course this is a complex matter, and every conflict has its own characteristics. The causes of conflicts may be immediate or deep-rooted. However, taking into account the experience with the conflicts which the Organization has been called upon to address, we can broadly identify three basic causes.

First, there is the lack of economic opportunity and there are social inequities, because war is the greatest enemy of development. Second is the excessive and destabilising accumulation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms, because these are the tools of violence. Third is the illegal exploitation of and trafficking in natural

resources, especially diamonds, because these provide funds for the purchase of weapons.

Given this state of affairs, we must as a matter of priority instil a culture of conflict prevention based on coordination and cooperation among the Members of the Organization, its various bodies and regional organizations and agreements, making it possible to develop and implement appropriate strategies.

Among the components of this culture of prevention of armed conflicts, we might think of early warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, preventive disarmament and post-conflict peace-building. We should also include the use of Security Council missions, reports by the Secretary-General, the development of confidence- and security-building measures, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in post-conflict situations, together with the use of civilian police to prevent a resurgence of those conflicts.

If a culture of prevention is to be successful, it must have two elements. The first is financial resources in order to carry out these measures, and in this regard we welcome the contributions made to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action. The second element is real political will on the part of the parties to a conflict to overcome that conflict, as there is little that can be done by those outside a conflict, even if they have the best of intentions.

The Charter of the Organization eloquently articulates our commitment:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (*Charter of the United Nations, Preamble*).

On this premise, it is incontestable that the United Nations — and the Security Council in particular — has a moral and legal obligation to prevent conflicts.

The presidential statement that we will adopt reflects our will and determination to adopt concrete measures to make progress in establishing a culture of prevention. Let us keep that will and determination in focus. There is no doubt that the costs will be significant, but they will be amply offset by the promise of a better future free from conflicts.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation shares the view of the members of the Security Council, and of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, regarding the importance and timeliness of considering the broad range of issues connected with the prevention of armed conflicts. It is our belief that the legitimate legal foundation for preventing disputes and conflicts consists of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the Security Council and the norms of international law. The decisive role in this field is played by the Security Council — which under the Charter bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe that the principles laid down by the Charter and the processes for the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts are also fully applicable in the area of prevention.

A key role in preventive diplomacy properly belongs to the United Nations, which in this regard has available to it considerable possibilities and a wide array of means to prevent the escalation of disputes and military clashes. At the same time, we are convinced that preventive services to Member States should be granted on a purely voluntary basis while strictly observing the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs. Only the clearly expressed consent of the host country for preventive action can serve as a legal and political basis to adopt such steps, as well as a guarantee for their effectiveness. In this connection, we believe that any response by the United Nations — including responses to situations having a humanitarian component — must be conducted in strict accord with the Charter of the United Nations and exclusively by decision of the Security Council.

The evolution of world affairs makes it desirable to develop the norms of international law and, likewise, to adapt them to new realities. However, such work must be carried out collectively and be firmly based on the Charter of the United Nations. This will make it possible to reach consensus solutions whose legitimacy is not open to doubt.

Events in recent years have once again confirmed the importance of the consistent and strict observance of the principles on the non-use of force in international affairs, apart from those instances covered by the Charter. A positive example of such an implementation of those Charter principles is that of the events in East Timor a year ago, when precise and timely action by the Security Council in the context of

generally accepted norms of international law made it possible to avoid the escalation of the conflict.

We have frequently in the past had occasion to speak about the fundamentally important role that should be played by Security Council arms-supply embargo regimes in the prevention of armed conflicts. Unfortunately, the world community continues to get confirmation of the fact that the effectiveness of those regimes leaves a great deal to be desired. Among the most obvious examples of this is Kosovo, where the peacekeeping forces regularly discover new weapons caches that nurture the seeds of violence in that area and are one of the reasons for the absence of any stability in that part of the world.

The Russian Federation attaches paramount importance to improving such important means of preventing armed conflicts as early warning systems, using the potential of the Secretary-General, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, and making more effective use of programmes in the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life. The role of civilian police is equally important in the preventive action of the United Nations.

We believe that these elements should become part and parcel of a comprehensive strategy for the prevention of conflicts, the need for which is referred to in the draft presidential statement of the Council prepared on Jamaica's initiative. Such a strategy should be developed while taking into account the opinions and thinking of the Members States of the United Nations. In this connection, we would like to reiterate our readiness to make our contribution to collecting information that can subsequently become raw material for the preparation of a report of the Secretary-General on this topic.

The Russian Federation is fully aware of its responsibility as a permanent member of the Security Council, and is prepared to continue to promote the exploration of ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the efforts of the Security Council to prevent armed conflicts.

Mr. Scheffers (Netherlands): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over a public meeting on another important subject. The Netherlands welcomes your initiative to devote a follow-up open debate to the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts.

Let me also join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his important, action-oriented presentation.

As stated earlier in our first debate in November last year, my delegation regards conflict prevention as the core of the duties the Security Council is called upon to carry out on behalf of the membership of the United Nations. It lies, naturally and manifestly, at the heart of the Netherlands integrated approach to the Council's agenda. The next portion of my remarks should be seen as complementary to the statement to be made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

Given the ongoing discussion on the scope of responsibilities of the Security Council, the Netherlands wishes to reiterate once more its views on that matter. Everything the Charter has to say on conflict prevention — Chapters VI and VII and Article 99 — appears to have been drafted, more than half a century ago and in the aftermath of the Second World War, with conflicts between States in mind. However, the overwhelming majority of present-day conflicts on the Council's agenda is of an internal, domestic nature, while at the same time threatening international peace and security. In view of its primary responsibilities the Security Council cannot but subscribe to a more flexible interpretation of Article 2, paragraph 7, which stipulates that nothing in the Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

A rigid interpretation of this paragraph would preclude the Council from taking any action, preventive or not, in the majority of issues on its agenda and would therefore prevent the Security Council from shouldering the responsibilities it is called upon to carry out. Conflict prevention by the Security Council has three pillars: early warning, early attention and early action.

The creation of a culture of prevention requires a broad and integrated approach based on the analysis of the root causes of armed conflicts. We often witness the emergence of violent conflicts within States when political, economic, social and ethnic dividing lines coincide in an environment in which the State is suffering from a lack of legitimacy and capacity. In such cases Governments often are unable to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence and repression.

Indeed, resorting to repression is the easiest answer of a weak State to the demands of groups within a society that already feel discriminated against. That repression usually takes the shape of violations of human rights. However, the evident lack of respect for human rights on the part of the State undermines further the legitimacy of that State. The repressed are likely to resort to violence as well, and a spiral of violence ensues.

Recently we have been witnessing conflicts about control of, or access to, natural resources. In such cases economic considerations are at stake, and the struggle is not so much about political power. However, the result is the same: the emergence of armed conflict.

In some cases dormant conflicts are turned into armed conflicts by triggering factors, such as a sudden deterioration of economic perspectives, the demise of a leader, or a flow of small arms and light weapons.

In a culture of prevention, the Council should be especially alert for signs of deterioration, as these constitute a clear early warning. In our view, it stands to reason that international peace and security in their widest sense are best served by democracy, the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and sustainable development. Likewise, if these basic conditions are deteriorating within a country, the chances of violent conflicts erupting are mounting. Indeed, one of the most telling indicators of pending conflict is the occurrence of rampant human rights violations. As I indicated before, such abuses reflect a breakdown of the rule of law and can be a prelude to violent domestic conflict, with consequences for international peace and security. Therefore, the Security Council should approach reports of the Commission on Human Rights and of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as potential early-warning documents.

The Netherlands is in favour of the establishment of expert panels by the Secretary-General as early-warning instruments. In this regard, I should like to underline the importance of giving adequate follow-up to early-warning signals, namely, the two other pillars: early attention and early action — in other words, a more proactive approach is called for.

The Netherlands is in favour of enlarging the financial resources at the disposal of the Secretary-General for preventive diplomacy — for instance, for financing fact-finding missions and his special representatives. Therefore the Netherlands, along with other Member States, has contributed substantially to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action. Out of this Trust Fund activities instrumental to conflict prevention can be financed, such as expert meetings, the organization of peace talks, the establishment of a local United Nations representation, and missions of special representatives in order to improve communications between the United Nations and the government concerned.

In this context, I should like to point out that the Netherlands would prefer that the Secretary-General be able to finance such activities from the regular budget and that the Netherlands is only contributing to the Trust Fund awaiting agreement on this matter.

The foundations for post-conflict peace-building should be laid during peace negotiations, which should involve all segments of society in order to create broad support for the peace process. Negotiations held solely at a high political level will result only in paper agreements without support in society. Therefore cooperation with non-governmental organizations is of vital importance for the peace process to take root and to succeed.

Furthermore, peace agreements often do not really address the root causes which have led to armed conflict. In the post-conflict phase, ample attention should be given to those causes in order to prevent a rekindling of armed conflict. Of equal importance in the post-conflict situation are the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in society. All in all, for security and development to be mutually reinforcing elements of a sustainable peace, reform of the security sector is essential.

In conclusion, Sir, my delegation considers the presidential statement which you are going to read out to be a welcome and useful follow-up document. That statement covers very extensively and comprehensively many, if not all, aspects of the issue of preventing armed conflicts, which is and remains very much at the core of the Council's responsibilities. Let us indeed use this document as a catalyst for concrete actions with renewed vigour.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, Sir, I wish to welcome your presence among us and to express my satisfaction at seeing you preside over this meeting. I would like also to welcome

the Secretary-General's important statement on conflict prevention.

It is the Chinese delegation's long-held view that timely and effective preventive measures taken before conflict erupts are the most fruitful. They help not only to avert the loss of life and property but also to preserve resources. For this reason, we would like to thank the delegation of Jamaica for its initiative in arranging this open debate.

As the manifestations and causes of conflicts vary throughout the world, measures taken by the United Nations to prevent them will also vary from case to case. However, they all must be taken in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Given the ultimate aim of conflict prevention, actions taken by the international community should focus on the peaceful resolution of conflicts and avoid exacerbating tensions or giving rise to new ones.

The Security Council has already taken some positive measures in this regard, including the sending of fact-finding missions to areas of conflict; the holding of a greater number of open debates on specific issues; and the strengthening of the implementation of Article 99 of the Charter, in encouraging the Secretary-General to play his rightful role in this regard. All of these commendable measures have enriched the Council's experience in handling issues involving international peace and security.

The Chinese delegation maintains that all conflict-prevention measures must respect the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned and the will of their Governments and peoples. The principle of non-interference in internal affairs is essential in guiding United Nations conflict-prevention activities. Preventive measures should be taken only upon request or with the consent and cooperation of the countries concerned. As to issues such as the setting up of early-warning systems or the sending of fact-finding or other special missions, which bear on the sovereignty of a State, prior consent must be obtained from the countries or parties concerned. Otherwise, not only will the goal of conflict prevention not be achieved, but many complex problems, or even new conflicts, may arise. Before any major decisions are made, it is imperative that the Security Council consider the views of, and the information provided by, all sides in a neutral and fair manner.

Conflict prevention has begun to serve as an important means to solve conflicts peacefully. The Security Council, which shoulders the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should play a leading role in conflict prevention. At the same time, it should attach importance to the role of regional organizations and cooperate with them. Such cooperation, however, should be carried out on the basis of the observance, by the regional organizations, of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as relevant stipulations of Chapter VIII of the Charter. By accepting the guidance and monitoring of the United Nations, regional organizations will be able to win cooperation from the United Nations and more extensive support from the international community, thus functioning more constructively in preventive diplomacy.

As many countries have stressed, in order to prevent armed conflicts more effectively, importance has to be given to addressing the fundamental issue of the economic development of the many developing countries. Otherwise, the prevention of armed conflicts will end up curing merely symptoms rather than root causes and reacting passively to one situation after another. Therefore, the promotion of economic and social development in developing countries is of great relevance to the prevention of armed conflicts.

It is gratifying that the issue of conflict prevention has attracted increasing attention. However, a closer analysis shows that the United Nations still lacks sufficient practice in this field. Some measures remain at a conceptual stage; others, though already adopted, need to be tested by practice. Therefore, to guarantee the success of United Nations conflict-prevention activities, it is critical that experience be built up and that lessons be learned continuously on the basis of experience. To this end, the Chinese delegation is willing to work together with all other delegations to continue to contribute actively to this endeavour.

The President: I thank the representative of China for his kind words.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The Tunisian delegation is grateful to you, Sir, for having scheduled this formal meeting of the Security Council to consider a question of such importance as

that of the prevention of armed conflict. This issue is at the very heart of the concerns of the United Nations and the international community as a whole, and for good reason.

The experience that has been gained by the United Nations over the years, particularly from its intense and diverse actions to settle conflicts during the past decade, offers us many lessons that are worthy of greater attention on the part of the Security Council as the body with the principal responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Prevention is better than cure, as per the well-known old saw, whose wisdom remains unchanged. In the geopolitical field, prevention can save thousands of human lives and preserve valuable resources for development. We have seen how the human and material costs of conflicts have risen in the many conflict situations of the 1990s — situations in which some 80,000 United Nations Blue Helmets have been involved in peacekeeping operations.

Today more than ever, conflict prevention should be elevated to the level of a global, integrated strategy, with the aim of ensuring not only the absence of conflicts but also conditions most conducive to peace. These conditions could be of a political, economic, social or cultural nature. The international community has the means of pursuing this strategy. It must also have the constant determination to do so.

Per its prerogatives under the Charter regarding the preservation of international peace and security, the Security Council has a part to play in the prevention of armed conflicts, whether this involves preventing the outbreak of conflicts or preventing their resurgence. Here, one means available to the Council is preventive deployment, to which it should resort whenever necessary. Of course this should be done while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned and acting with the consent of the relevant Governments.

Preventive disarmament is another means of action available to the Council. In the context of peacekeeping operations, the programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants have undoubtedly had a decisive affect on preventing the recurrence of conflicts, but also, in the longer term, in consolidating the foundations of peace. Also decisive are all actions aimed at supporting the fight against the trafficking in and circulation of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons. The excessive and destablizing stockpiling of these weapons encourages violence and is a means of waging war. It is up to the Security Council to ensure respect for the various arms embargos that it imposes on countries in which armed conflicts are occurring.

Regional organizations have an important role to play in conflict prevention. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provides an appropriate framework for cooperation and coordination among the regional organizations and the United Nations, in particular the Security Council and the Secretary-General. The ways and means of this cooperation have to be strengthened by setting up appropriate strategies of cooperation, including in the areas of early warning and information exchange.

In this context, my delegation emphasizes the need to strengthen the conflict-prevention capacity of the Organization of African Unity, in particular its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The creation of this Mechanism several years ago demonstrates the determination of Africa to reduce the impact of conflicts, a determination that requires the political and financial support of the international community.

The role of the Secretary-General in conflict prevention is an essential one, which he exercises in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter. This Article authorizes him to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. Furthermore, preventive diplomacy provides the Secretary-General considerable leeway with respect to conflict prevention, which he can make use of either directly or through his special envoys.

We believe that a sound and viable long-term strategy for conflict prevention must take into account the underlying causes of conflicts and the violence that feeds them and results from them. Such a strategy must note that conflicts often originate in the poor economic and social conditions — underdevelopment, poverty and destitution — of the people in the countries affected by conflicts. We believe that really tackling economic and social development needs would make a substantial contribution to eliminating the causes of the conflict and violence that are rampant in several parts of the world. The case of the African continent is particularly instructive in this regard.

The international community must reiterate its commitment to international economic cooperation for development. This should include according to development assistance the attention and importance it deserves. Furthermore, sustained attention should be given to post-conflict peace-building, which requires the urgent mobilization of resources for economic reconstruction. This is one of the bases for the restoration of normalcy in a post-conflict situation. To this end, there needs to be increased coordination between the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the Bretton Woods institutions and aid donors.

In sum, what the international community has to do now is to define a coherent conflict-prevention strategy that takes into account all the dimensions of the question, which are interdependent and complementary. These dimensions are the political, military and security issues, as well as economic and social considerations and a renewed international commitment to effectively preventing such conflicts while, at the same time, preserving respect for the fundamental principles that form the basis of the system of international relations. These principles are respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. This is a true culture of prevention, which needs to be developed in the framework of mutual respect.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to you, Sir, and the delegation of Jamaica for convening this open meeting of the Council to revisit this enormously important subject of the prevention of armed conflict, which the Council deliberated on in November last year. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his very important statement, which provides a useful setting for our discussion this morning.

Much has been said today on the subject and my statement this morning will be relatively brief, since I addressed the issue in a substantive fashion on that previous occasion. My delegation agrees with many of the points that have been made, both in terms of the substance and of the approach to be taken in pursuing this important subject. We agree that there is a need for the United Nations to embark on preventive diplomacy and preventive action as a more cost-effective approach than mounting a peacekeeping operation after a conflict has erupted. The Secretary-General put the subject in its proper context today and last November, and hit the nail squarely on the head when he said in that earlier debate that

> "the case for prevention of conflict hardly needs restating. Quite simply, it is cost-effective, in financial as well as human terms". (*S/PV.4072*, p. 2)

We also agree on the need for greater coordination and cooperation on the part of the entire United Nations system in the area of conflict prevention, including addressing the root causes of conflicts, which, as the Secretary-General has put it, are often deep-rooted and involve socio-economic factors such as, *inter alia*, poverty and underdevelopment, repression and discrimination. These must be seriously addressed by the Governments concerned, with the support and understanding of the international community. These Governments must be assisted and encouraged to move in the direction of good governance, which is an essential underpinning of domestic peace and stability. We would also underscore the importance of increased coordination and support within the United Nations system, particularly in respect of the mobilization of resources for conflict-prevention activities.

The presidential statement adopted in November last year and the draft presidential statement which the Council will adopt at the end of this meeting, while not exhaustive, contain virtually all of the elements that, if acted upon by the Council and the international community, will go a long way towards making preventive diplomacy and preventive action an integral part of the work of the United Nations, thereby making prevention one of the main tasks of this Organization, to cite the words of the Secretary-General himself.

In our view, the concept of preventive diplomacy or preventive action should also include conflict situations in which there is neither peace nor war, such as the situation prevailing in Somalia. We should not wait for war to break out again in that country before we act.

I would like the remainder of my statement to take up a point made by the Secretary-General in November last year. During that previous debate, the Secretary-General suggested that the Council — indeed, challenged it to — examine how it could make prevention a tangible part of its day-to-day work. To meet this challenge, the Council would have to reorient itself from its usually reactive approach to the

management of conflict to one of pre-empting or preventing conflicts. This would require a deliberate and conscious effort on the part of the Council to set aside a part of its monthly work programme for an in-depth analysis of potential conflict situations and to formulate appropriate strategies and approaches on how best to handle these potential crises.

For this purpose, the Council would benefit tremendously from timely and in-depth briefings by the Secretariat on potential conflict situations that would be brought to the attention of the Council by the Secretary-General by virtue of Article 99 of the Charter, which should be invoked more frequently than it has been in the past. The Secretary-General is been entrusted, indeed empowered, to do so by the Charter and should be encouraged to invoke this prerogative to give substance to the concept of conflict preventive.

Of course, because of the political sensitivities involved, it may well be necessary for such discussions to be conducted in a more informal and restricted setting than is provided for under present arrangements. Indeed, given the working methods and procedures of the Council, which constrain innovative actions, it is perhaps more appropriate for the Secretary-General to take the initiative on discussions of preventive diplomacy by convening such informal exchanges of views. Whatever the format, an appropriate time can be set aside by the Council for such exchange of views. In the interest of preventive diplomacy, the larger membership of the Organization will, in our view, not begrudge a certain lack of transparency on the part of the Council on matters where discretion is required.

It goes without saying that there is a need for the Secretariat to enhance its early-warning capability to be better able to serve the Secretary-General and the Council in this area of conflict prevention. The Department of Political Affairs will have to be further strengthened and resources made available to enable it to make a real contribution to this aspect of the work of the Council. To a certain extent, Member States with the capability to do so can assist the Secretariat through regular sharing of vital information pertaining to threats to peace and security, but this can, at best, be supplementary in nature and cannot replace its own independent means of information-gathering and analysis.

Such activities can be further augmented by more frequent use of fact-finding missions, either by the Secretary-General or by the Council itself — an idea which has been suggested by the Secretary-General and which was in fact successfully put to use when the Council despatched its mission to Jakarta and Dili last year. That mission, however — like the missions to Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia and Eritrea — was not entirely preventive in nature, as conflict had already erupted before the Council acted.

A truly preventive action or preventive diplomacy would involve the despatch of a mission to a potential area of conflict that has not erupted and which results in averting the conflict. Such missions, of course, lie more appropriately in the realm of preventive diplomacy, as opposed to preventive action, and might perhaps be best handled by the Secretary-General or his emissary in the context of his good offices or by individual Member States that are prepared to undertake such quiet and sensitive diplomacy. In my view, such discreet diplomacy, without the threat of the use of force, may well fall within the concept of intervention that the Secretary-General has been talking about for some time now and about which he may well have been greatly misunderstood.

In this context, I am inclined to agree with the opinion expressed by Ambassador Dejammet, the former Permanent Representative of France, when he said during the previous debate on this same issue that

> "one must not confuse debate with having recourse to force, which comes under other provisions that are precise and limiting. The Council can take up an issue and take preventive measures without necessarily envisaging the use of force." (*Ibid.*, p. 10)

In considering these possibilities, it is important, of course, for the Council to be guided by the principles of respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, enshrined in the Charter.

My delegation associates itself fully with the draft presidential statement to be adopted at the end of this meeting. What is needed now is for the Council to act on these important ideas and proposals, lest it be accused of continued inaction on this enormously important subject. As a member of the Council, in the remaining five months of its membership, Malaysia will play its part in encouraging the Council to meet

the Secretary-General's challenge that it make prevention a tangible part of its work, if not on a day-to-day basis, at least initially under a regular, perhaps monthly basis.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I should like to join previous speakers in conveying to you, Mr. President, my delegation's appreciation for placing the question of conflict prevention on the Security Council's agenda. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his important statement. The recommendations he made earlier this morning deserve our very close attention.

The end of bloc confrontation at the beginning of 1990s, the aspiration of peoples for greater freedom and democracy and the emergence of nationalism across continents have, in recent years, given rise to grave crises which have resulted in the forced displacement of entire peoples, the targeting of civilians and massacres of all sorts. As the Secretary-General said, at least 5 million people have lost their lives in recent years.

In keeping with its universal vocation, the United Nations has done and is doing its utmost to find adequate solutions to these crises wherever they arise. It has considerably strengthened its capacity to tackle such challenges. But this mission should not be confined solely to conflict settlement. The Secretariat now needs to consider ways of bolstering its conflict-prevention capacities and to give prevention all the attention it deserves. We are very pleased, therefore, to note that a focal point for conflict prevention issues has been designated.

My delegation would like to confine itself to making three brief comments.

First, with regard to support for conflict-prevention mechanisms and regional cooperation, a number of initiatives have been taken in recent years at the regional and subregional levels. Although these conflict-prevention mechanisms have not all been successful, they nonetheless deserve support. At the subregional level, in the West African region, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has set up a peace and mediation committee with responsibility for examining matters affecting States, and it is contributing to peacekeeping through the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Cooperation between ECOMOG and the United Nations has contributed not only to re-establishing peace in Liberia but to preventing the resurgence of conflict in that country.

Furthermore, the satisfactory initiative of the Group of Eight, as reflected in the Miyazaki document, is very welcome. We look forward to its effective implementation.

My delegation would like to stress that there is a need for the United Nations to support the efforts of the various regions in the context of the conflict-prevention mechanisms that they have established. In this regard, the Security Council should provide all necessary support.

Secondly, with regard to the proliferation of weapons and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, it is incontestable that the illicit and unbridled accumulation of small arms and light weapons is fuelling and worsening conflicts. The West African subregion, which saw the danger of this phenomenon, established a moratorium on light weapons after my country launched an initiative to collect such arms. In this context, it set up a community assistance programme for security and development, whose principal mission is to reduce the number of light weapons and control their proliferation.

Measures to collect light weapons and reduce their numbers, to strengthen controls over the legal trade of such weapons and to promote transparency in this area should be undertaken at the regional level in order to prevent conflict. Furthermore, the link between the illegal accumulation of small arms and the illegal exploitation of natural resources has been clearly demonstrated. Recent events are an eloquent testimony to this fact. The entire international community, especially those that profit from this trade, needs to work together to take appropriate measures to ensure that the trade in natural resources, particularly diamonds, is ethical.

Thirdly, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration at the end of a conflict must be accorded priority if we are to ensure that hostilities do not break out again. In his report on the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the Secretary-General highlighted a number of key elements necessary for the success of that process and proposed measures that the United Nations could take for the more effective

support of future efforts. In this context, we share the view that the bases for an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme must be established in the peace agreement that brings a conflict to an end.

It is also important to ensure adequate technical and financial support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the participation of financial institutions in the process under way and supports the increasingly constructive attitude of the private sector.

Lastly, the question of child soldiers must be taken into account at all levels in long-term programmes, including economic development programmes. The success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities is vital if we are to avoid further conflict.

Economic development remains the surest foundation for lasting peace and security. Conflict prevention therefore needs to be underpinned by balanced development assistance programmes involving the active participation of civil society.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to advocate the emergence of a genuine culture of prevention based on preventive diplomacy, respect for international law and democratic norms and the reduction of poverty. My delegation fully supports the presidential statement that will be issued later.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to join others in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your initiative to convene this very important meeting on conflict prevention. We also thank the Secretary-General for his broad and thoughtful introductory statement at this meeting, and in particular for the excellent proposals he put forward. My delegation also wishes to commend him for his commitment and dedication to conflict prevention.

Like the HIV/AIDS pandemic, conflicts are in the process of devastating Africa. The situation requires a concerted and multifaceted approach by the Security Council and other partners to prevent them. That is the reason why my delegation commends you, Mr. President, and your delegation for initiating the comprehensive draft presidential statement which we will issue later today. It takes forward and elaborates the Council's work on this very important subject.

The root causes of conflict in Africa remain poverty and underdevelopment. History has proved that if we are to achieve any progress in conflict prevention, these problems have to be solved. The underlying causes, such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, in particular diamonds, further exacerbate the situation. I will return to this point later.

The primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the Security Council. However, the effective prevention of the outbreak or re-emergence of conflict requires concerted efforts from a number of actors, including Member States, the Secretary-General, regional organizations and international agencies. Since its successful mission to Jakarta and Dili last year, the Council has been making increasing use of similar missions as part of its preventive diplomacy, a practice that should be continued and expanded.

The Secretary-General, through his good offices, increasingly plays an essential role in conflict prevention through, *inter alia*, his capacity to mediate and negotiate and by dispatching envoys or special representatives to areas of conflict or potential conflict. Of utmost importance also is the information he provides to the Council about matters that may pose a threat to peace and security. The Council should support the Secretary-General in his efforts and make all necessary resources available to him.

My delegation highly appreciates the important role that women are playing in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. We strongly support their increased participation in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution.

Regional organizations and arrangements, in line with their mandate under Chapter VIII of the Charter, are also playing an increasingly important role in the maintenance of peace and security and in conflict prevention, as was proved in recent situations. However, when it comes to intervention by regional organizations, this must be done with the authorization of the Security Council as provided for in Article 53 of the Charter. Furthermore, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States must be respected.

My delegation welcomes the expanding relationship between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), especially in

conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking and conflict resolution.

The huge risks and costs, both in civilian life and in financial terms, and the destruction, human rights abuses and suffering caused by conflicts lend urgency to the need for the Council to shift focus faster from reaction to conflicts to conflict prevention. To achieve this, the Council must continuously examine and evaluate the means and measures at its disposal to prevent conflicts. Central to this is the most valuable aspect of conflict prevention, namely, the creation of a culture of prevention. Ways to accomplish this need to be identified. In addition, it must be recognized that measures such as early warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, preventive disarmament and pre- and post-conflict peace-building are interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy. Furthermore, the existing tools for conflict prevention, such as those provided for in Article 33 of the Charter, can be further strengthened and complemented.

For early warning we must adopt effective measures to avert tragedies in different parts of the world. The United Nations should thus not only strengthen and improve its own early warning mechanisms but should also contribute further, together with the international community, to the establishment and functioning of similar systems with regional organizations and arrangements. It is regrettable that some of these already existing systems are hampered by insufficient financing for appropriate operations.

Effective conflict prevention by the Council rests on early action in response to early warning through the above-mentioned mechanisms. The prerogative, therefore, rests largely with the Council in many situations to foster the necessary political will to react to warnings and to threats against peace and security. The action required would be either to prevent conflicts or to prevent a recurrence of hostilities after peace arrangements, often fragile, have been reached. In this regard, it remains crucial for the Council to deploy fully and speedily in the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to prevent further escalation of the conflict. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, the troop strength and the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) need to be strengthened.

I now wish to say a few words on some of the underlying factors that fuel conflicts, particularly in Africa. Primary among these are the illegal exploitation of and trade in natural resources, in particular diamonds, and the accumulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and heavy weapons. In order to prevent conflict, efforts to curb the exploitation and trafficking should be elaborated and strengthened. Furthermore, Member States should adhere to their legal and moral responsibilities to strictly implement the existing measures against these activities. We commend the steps already undertaken by Member States and other organizations to implement these measures.

In conclusion, Mr. President, for the Security Council to continue to play its role in conflict prevention, a strong political commitment from all Member States, complemented by provision of adequate resources, remains crucial. In short, they form an integral part of the effective prevention of conflict and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The Council's first thematic consideration of conflict prevention in November 1999 was an important initial step towards creating the culture of prevention called for by the Secretary-General in his address to the General Assembly last fall and repeated in his Millennium Report. We welcome the initiative of the Jamaican delegation and your personal presence today, Mr. Minister, for it underlines the importance of preventing armed conflicts and allows us to take stock of progress made and the challenges that remain to achieving this goal.

It is important to recognize that progress has been made. In Canada's time on the Council its security agenda has expanded gradually to include issues such as war-affected children, protection of civilians, terrorism, small arms, HIV/AIDS, refugees and an increasing number of humanitarian concerns. While the Council's engagement on these questions has been largely thematic and theoretical, in some cases, talk has led to action, for example by giving several peacekeeping operations explicit mandates to protect civilians. Also, the Council is beginning to recognize the importance of the economic underpinnings of conflict and, for example, has banned illicit diamonds from Sierra Leone. By tackling these new sources of conflict, the Council is contributing to the culture of prevention.

The challenge now and in the future is to take action on these new security priorities. Repeated debates in New York are not enough.

In an age where conflicts are increasingly defined by violations of human rights and humanitarian law, and in particular by the deliberate targeting of people and their communities, conflict-prevention strategies must include efforts to end the culture of impunity.

The International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia act as an important deterrent to those who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity by showing them that they are accountable for these crimes. The Council's efforts to address responsibility for the egregious crimes committed in Sierra Leone indicate that flagrant and systematic violation of human rights will not go unpunished.

As Canada has stressed repeatedly, the establishment of the International Criminal Court will serve as an even more powerful deterrent to human rights abuse by giving the international community a standing capacity to prosecute the most serious crimes ever known to humankind, rather than relying on an ad hoc approach.

(*spoke in English*)

More effective sanctions and peace operations can also contribute to conflict prevention. Preventive peace deployments obviously have an even more direct deterrent effect. As conflict is most likely to break out where it has occurred before, peace operations require the mandates and resources needed to prevent the resurgence of conflict. This is an area where progress has been slow. The events of May in Sierra Leone brought home the pitfalls of under-resourcing peace operations. In addition to fielding missions that are not always equal to the demands on the ground, the capacity to plan and deploy them rapidly is still seriously lacking. Unfortunately, the Council's decision-making on peacekeeping mandates continues to be unduly driven by outside political and financial considerations rather than realistic operational imperatives. We are encouraged, therefore, that today's Presidential Statement stresses the need to fully take into account military requirements and factors on the ground in the design phase of peacekeeping mandates.

In the same vein, Canada strongly welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel to review all aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We look forward to what we hope will be a candid report, addressing not only the shortcomings of the United Nations Organization, but also the role of Member States and the changes that are needed to improve United Nations peacekeeping. We hope and expect the report to focus on enhancing the conflict prevention capacity of peace operations.

We are more encouraged by recent steps to improve the instrument of sanctions. In Angola, the Council has launched an unprecedented effort to make the sanctions against UNITA work. I thank the Secretary-General and Ambassador Greenstock for their generous references to our efforts in this regard. Our successes, however, are only those of the Council and, in my view, demonstrate what can be achieved when this body is unanimously committed to achieving concrete results. The Council's work in such circumstances can have a real impact.

Yesterday I returned from the World Diamond Congress in Antwerp, where representatives of the diamond manufacturers and the diamond bourses adopted an important — indeed, I would say — stunning resolution which, when fully implemented, would prevent the bulk of conflict diamonds from reaching legitimate diamond markets and would do so without imposing collateral damage on the legitimate diamond trade. The issue of conflict diamonds dominated the World Diamond Congress, and I think it is fair to say that it has captured the interest of the international media. It is clear that, over the past few months, the diamond industry has decided to take this Council's invitation to collaborate with it in controlling the estimated four per cent of world diamond production that contributes to fuelling armed conflict. This collaboration will deny revenue to those who would pursue their nefarious objectives by force of arms. It will, therefore, make a real contribution to our collective efforts to prevent conflict.

The expert panel process devised for Angola is now being contemplated in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The establishment of such panels to investigate the role of natural resources in fuelling the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is also a positive step, at least in addressing the factors that motivate and sustain such conflict. We believe that the creation of the Council's first-ever informal working group to study the overall effectiveness of sanctions, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Chowdhury, is yet another positive

development. More effective sanctions will enhance the Council's efforts at ending and preventing conflict. I repeat Canada's call to make greater use of targeted sanctions as a preventive measure, rather than only imposing them once conflict has erupted.

There has also been some limited progress on adapting the Council's working methods to the requirements of conflict prevention. Last December, the Council agreed to use more flexible and inclusive meeting formats, which have been employed on a number of occasions since then. This, we believe, has had a positive impact in attracting a "buy-in" from the broader United Nations membership. There is still too much scope, however, for excluding pressing security issues from our agenda and for ignoring voices that should be heard. For example, the Council should be more responsive to the early warning signals of conflict provided by information on human rights abuse from the Commission on Human Rights and other credible sources. Regular briefings of the Council by human rights rapporteurs would, we believe, be useful in this regard.

Enhanced cooperation and coordination with regional organizations is important. Interaction between regional organizations and the United Nations has been critical — but, let's face it — far from perfect, in situations such as Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In these cases, regional and sub-regional organizations have taken the lead in the negotiation of peace agreements, and the United Nations has followed in the implementation phase. For such joint efforts to succeed, closer coordination — effective coordination — through all stages of conflict management remains vital, particularly if the United Nations is to avoid facing unrealistic expectations.

There will continue to be occasions when our best efforts at conflict prevention fail. In these circumstances, the international community should take decisive action to end and resolve conflicts, specifically those marked by a humanitarian imperative or gross violations of human rights. Such robust action, including humanitarian intervention, can, we believe, serve as a deterrent against future conflicts or violations of international law. Canada supports the Secretary-General's call in his Millennium Report for further debate on humanitarian intervention, and we will do our part to move this admittedly controversial issue forward.

Our focus on conflict prevention in the Security Council today is a welcome complement to discussions last week among the foreign ministers of the Group of Eight. Conflict prevention will also be discussed by G-8 leaders at the Okinawa Summit this weekend. We hope that this mutual reinforcement of common goals will continue.

Momentum is clearly building in favour of a culture of prevention. The where-with-all to make it happen is, however, sorely lacking. The risks and the costs, both human and financial, of taking action after conflict has erupted ought to be the best incentives for conflict prevention. Efforts by the international community must, however, be matched by a commitment by all concerned to assume ownership over conflict prevention strategies. Attempts to import solutions from the outside will not go far if the will to pursue peace and avoid conflict is not shared within the societies in question. Internal issues, ranging from good governance and respect for human rights to how scarce resources are allocated to protect human life, are key to the prevention of conflict and must be addressed forthrightly by all concerned. We are prepared to do our part, and we call on those who are engaged in conflict or are susceptible to it to do their part to contribute to establishing a culture of prevention.

In conclusion, I fully agree with the Secretary-General's comments this morning that we need to decide on practical measures for prevention, and then we need to act. Canada looks forward to the Secretary-General's report in this regard next May, and we will do all we can to encourage the Council to greater specific action.

Mr. Kuchynski (Ukraine): Like previous speakers, I would like to thank your delegation, Mr. President, for calling today's open debate on such important and multifaceted subject as the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts. We are honoured and pleased to take part in this debate under your presidency.

We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive statement on the subject under discussion.

It is generally recognized that the modern world is still characterized by the persistence of armed conflicts, which continue to cause human losses and mass violations of human rights, as well as economic, social and cultural devastation. In addition, since the

1990s internal armed conflicts have been steadily on the rise.

The root causes of armed conflicts are numerous and complex. They originate from different political, historical, economic and cultural backgrounds and are based on the lack of sustainable development, democracy, the rule of law and good governance, and the presence of long-standing inter-ethnic and inter-religious intolerance.

At the same time, while there is no full unanimity among the membership of the United Nations about approaches to eliminate the root causes of armed conflicts, no one disputes that armed conflicts can be avoided. We also feel that there is a widely growing consensus that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In our view, it is high time to make a transition from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his annual report. The strategies for conflict prevention outlined by the Secretary-General in his report therefore have our full understanding and support.

We also share the view that since the causes of conflicts are often nurtured in the minds of men, the promotion of a culture of peace is an indispensable element of conflict prevention. In this connection, my delegation fully subscribes to all the provisions of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted by the General Assembly, and looks forward to their implementation.

We think that the leading role of the Security Council in the area of conflict prevention should be maintained and strengthened. The prevention, containment and elimination of armed conflicts constitute a major task of this body, in view of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time, the task of eliminating the root causes of armed conflicts — in particular those of an economic, social and humanitarian nature — falls largely under the mandate of other principal bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations.

In this regard, we feel that there is a need for increased coordination of efforts and a clear division of labour between the Security Council and other United Nations bodies in the area of conflict prevention. Moreover, it is obvious that the efforts of the Security Council and other United Nations bodies will not yield results unless they are supported by the parties to a dispute and, of course, by all Member States.

Although there are no standard remedies for each single conflict situation, we feel that the Security Council's task could be facilitated through the development of a framework document to define clear-cut principles and criteria for its steps at different stages of conflict prevention. Such a document could provide a basis for decisions of the Security Council on enforcement measures to avert the emergence of armed conflicts within States at an early stage. Once that document is universally accepted, it could substantially enhance the capacity of the Security Council in taking timely action in the prevention of armed conflicts. Ukraine stands ready to participate in further discussions of this subject in practical terms.

It is our strong belief that any preventive measures by the Security Council should be based on the United Nations Charter and on the principles and norms of international law. We are pleased that these principles and norms are clearly spelled out in the draft presidential statement to be adopted today.

My delegation believes that the Security Council should more actively employ, with the consent of host countries, its past experience in preventive deployment missions in areas of likely tensions. In this regard, one can cite the United Nations mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In our view, the unique and successful experience of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), which remains the only preventive deployment mission in the history of United Nations peace-support efforts, should be further exploited and developed.

In view of the recent useful practice of undertaking Security Council missions to various conflict regions, we think that it is also worth considering establishing the practice of regularly visiting conflict-prone States or potential zones of conflict.

Ukraine believes that the Secretary-General plays an essential role in conflict prevention in bringing to the attention of the Security Council any matter that may threaten international peace and security, in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter. The Secretary-General is entitled to use actively all available instruments to undertake timely preventive political and diplomatic measures. Those include confidence-building, early-warning, fact-finding, good

offices, mediation and citizen diplomacy measures, as well as the naming of special representatives, envoys and so on.

My country maintains that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangement in the field of the prevention of armed conflicts could be intensified on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter, provided that the key role of the Security Council remains unchanged. In this context, we believe that the African continent still requires continuous and comprehensive assistance of the part of the United Nations. In our view, particular attention should be paid to the enhancement of cooperation with the Organization of African Unity in order to facilitate the further development of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

Ukraine also welcomes the recent G-8 Miyazaki initiatives for conflict prevention as a demonstration of the continued commitment of those countries to make the prevention of armed conflicts a high priority-issue in the coming years.

Since illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons contributes significantly to the flaring-up, duration and re-emergence of armed conflicts, the role of preventive disarmament in averting armed conflicts can hardly be overestimated.

In this context, let me recall the initiative of Ukraine to convene, under the auspices of the United Nations, an international meeting of experts of major arms-producing countries, with a view to elaborating effective measures to prevent the reselling of arms from end users to third parties. We believe that the implementation of this proposal could facilitate further activities of the Security Council in elaborating conflict-prevention strategies and fill gaps in the relevant international instruments.

My delegation is of the view that the Security Council would be more successful in discharging its conflict-prevention duties if it could rely on an enhanced United Nations rapid-reaction capability. In this regard, Ukraine would like to see the further development of the United Nations Stand-by Arrangements System and the earliest completion of the establishment of the Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters. Next month will mark three years since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations on Ukraine's contribution, in personnel and in matériel, to that System. Even as I speak, one of the units registered in that Memorandum, namely, a joint Ukrainian-Polish peacekeeping battalion, is being deployed in Kosovo to serve with the Kosovo Force (KFOR). We hope that this battalion's practical experience on the ground will increase its effectiveness with regard to its future participation in the activities of the United Nations Stand-by System.

Over the past six years, Ukraine has consistently advocated the establishment of an effective United Nations preventive mechanism for the global monitoring of, and timely reaction to, potential sources of conflict. We are confident that this challenging and critical task has not lost its urgency. We believe that this subject could be addressed at the ministerial meeting of the Security Council on conflict prevention, which hopefully will be convened next year. My delegation hopes that the current debate and the presidential statement that will be issued, which my delegation fully supports, will effectively contribute to accomplishing this important task.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jamaica.

Today the Security Council is taking a careful look at ways in which conflicts might better be averted through creative initiatives by the Council and relevant actors in the international community. As President of the Security Council this month, Jamaica called for discussion on this issue by the Council out of a deep conviction that, unless strong emphasis is placed on conflict prevention, this new century could well become more deadly than the last, with the United Nations and other international bodies caught in an endless struggle to restore peace among warring groups.

My delegation wishes to recognize the valuable work done on this subject during the presidency of Slovenia in November 1999.

The outbreak of new conflicts and the renewal of old hostilities in many parts of the globe has restored a sense of urgency to the debate on conflict prevention that has occupied the attention of the United Nations and other governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with issues of peace and security. Secretary-General Kofi Annan correctly stated in his 1999 report on the work of the Organization that

the United Nations in the twenty-first century must become increasingly a focus of preventive action.

As many nations grow weary of the burdens of peacemaking and peacekeeping, the challenge to find new paths and stability through the avoidance of war has become more critical. The tragedies witnessed in Rwanda and the Balkans have stirred a global community stung by the horrors of these wars to say "never again". However, the means by which this sentiment may be translated into reality are not altogether clear. The seeds of conflict cannot be wished away by a mere consciousness of the horrors of war. Indeed, parties are not easily deterred from an agenda of war and destruction, even in the face of tremendous human and material costs. The simple fact is that the prevention of conflict is infinitely better than heroic measures to secure victory or restore peace.

The international community must work to find means of defusing the all-too-prevalent circumstances of ethnic hatred, bigotry, religious intolerance and misplaced nationalistic tendencies that so often spiral out of control and lead to violent conflict. It must also pay special attention to the often-overlooked economic underpinnings of such conflict. Poverty, inequality and underdevelopment provide fertile ground for the emergence of tension and deadly conflict among and within communities that can least afford the consequences of hostilities. It is a sad irony that many societies faced with unresolved tensions of one sort or another are often confronted with severe economic hardships. These tensions often define the parties in a struggle for scarce resources and increase the potential for armed conflict.

The international community must convert the fruits of the dialogue on conflict prevention into a road map for peace. Already radical initiatives such as the move by the Security Council to boldly challenge the sinister relationship between diamond trading and bloody conflict in Sierra Leone, Angola and elsewhere in Africa point to a new day in the international community's pursuit of peace. If the political will is summoned to deny the ability of warring factions to sustain their illicit trade in natural resources, a vital lifeline that supports and sustains armed conflict will be degraded, if not destroyed.

Special efforts to deny to similar groups the fruits of trafficking in illicit drugs must also be encouraged. An all-out effort must be made to stem the illicit trafficking of small arms. These weapons are the insidious tools of trade that precipitate and sustain armed conflicts and fuel increasing levels of violent crime, which undermine the fabric of societies and threaten the stability of many small States.

Our focus on prevention of armed conflicts must be founded on practical considerations that can be popularly understood and accepted. The economic costs of conflicts provide a sobering picture at a time when resources for development and poverty eradication are hard to come by and are insufficient to meet the demands of the global community. The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict estimated that the cost to the international community of the seven major wars in the 1990s — not including Kosovo — was $199 billion. The World Bank in that period disbursed some $191 billion. Without taking into account the incalculable effect of the squandering and sacrificing of the lives of young men and women — our most precious resources — in these deadly conflicts, it is clear from a purely economic standpoint that this cycle of self-destruction which threatens so many societies must be averted if humankind is to truly make progress in the twenty-first century.

The international community should not adopt a scale of priorities that gives greater importance to some regions over others. It must base its decisions on the objective merits of each situation — especially the severity of the conflict and the capacity for death and destruction that each brings. As the figures that I cited earlier demonstrate, the cost of war vastly outstrips the resources required for maintaining institutions that promote conflict prevention and resolution. We must commit to providing the United Nations, and to regional bodies concerned with conflict prevention and resolution, the resources necessary to enable timely and effective action to avert or quickly resolve conflicts. Starving these entities of scarce resources is a recipe for continued disaster. At the same time, there must be a renewed commitment to providing the means for empowering societies economically, and to undoing the circumstances of inequity and deprivation that threaten the stability of many of them. A proper mix of economic support, and the fostering of the principles of fairness, justice and good governance in the policies of key institutions, can only assist in the effort to reduce the tensions that often lead to deadly conflict.

A careful examination of the root causes of armed conflict suggests that the answers will not be easy to come by. The hostilities that haunt us are driven by powerful forces that are deeply entrenched. The challenge for the Council is to look beyond the enormity of the challenge, find solutions and chart a course of action for the twenty-first century.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Sir, for having organized this debate and thank you also for having honoured us by your presence.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries, Cyprus and Malta, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union congratulates the Jamaican presidency on organizing this debate on conflict prevention, which is an aspect of the maintenance of international peace and security that is too often overlooked. However, in accordance with Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter, one of the purposes of the United Nations is:

> "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

Thus, the Secretary-General has rightly called for the development of a "culture of prevention".

First, I would like to underscore the importance of prevention, and also the difficulties it raises. There are several reasons why the prevention of armed conflict arouses less interest than dealing with the effects of armed conflicts themselves. This is particularly regrettable since prevention is always less costly than dealing with conflicts — be this from a human, political, economic or financial perspective. Prevention very often involves discretion more than publicity, perseverance more than action. It seems, therefore, to offer less opportunities to enhance one's political status or media image.

Prevention is not without risk. There is a risk of overreacting or of not reacting enough, of acting too soon or too late. Nevertheless, we must accept this risk, since if we do not take it, we leave ourselves open to even greater difficulties.

The results of prevention are also difficult to assess. How do we know whether a particular action has achieved its aim? How do we learn from a policy of prevention?

Another difficulty with prevention lies in its degree of compatibility with the sovereignty of States. Most of the current conflicts are not direct conflicts between States, but internal conflicts, resulting from economic or political problems — seizure of power and wealth by a political or ethnic group, failure to comply with the rights of minority groups, secessionism and so forth.

It should, of course, be pointed out that local actors have the principal responsibility for prevention. Does this mean, however, that these internal crises and tensions, which may degenerate into conflict, do not involve the international community? In fact, for several years the Security Council has been involved in dealing with internal conflicts that in almost every case have international repercussions.

Preventive action presupposes that at a stage prior to the eruption of the conflict, the Security Council may become involved in a potentially dangerous situation and, if necessary, consider actions. Such a situation has already occurred in the past. The Council has acknowledged its responsibility. This shows that it can and knows how to adapt to developments in the very nature of conflicts, including from the point of view of prevention. Such adaptation should be welcomed and encouraged.

This development, however, should not be confined to the Security Council, but be fully taken up by States themselves and by regional organizations, which have a central role to play in the matter.

Secondly, the European Union considers that the best means of preventing conflicts is to address their fundamental causes. This goes beyond the sphere of competence of the Security Council, yet it is a fundamental aspect of conflict prevention. Responsibility in these areas lies primarily with the States themselves, but international institutions and donors of funds have a not inconsiderable role to play in providing impetus.

The first and not the least aspect of this is of course economic and social development. Poverty

leads to frustration and revolts, which may degenerate into conflicts. Economic development is, therefore, an essential factor in the prevention of conflicts. We cannot emphasize this point enough.

However, such development must be sustainable and harmonious. It must be sustainable so that natural resources are not wasted and economic growth is not achieved to the detriment of future generations. It must be harmonious so that everyone benefits from it. It must, therefore, include a social dimension — public education, sanitation, health-care and equal access by all — men and women — to a decent standard of living.

The most industrialized countries can and must help the developing countries by placing at their disposal technological, financial and human resources and by maintaining an appropriate level of aid, including governmental aid, for development. That is what the European Union has done in adopting an important policy based on cooperation and the openness of its markets.

Furthermore, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the democratic foundations and functioning of political systems must be ensured. A State that respects the fundamental rights of its citizens and has a participatory political system allows not only freedom of expression, but also the possibility of everyone's interests being taken into account, thus reducing the risk that all or part of society will rebel against the State or seek to secede from it. Political life should not boil down to an all-or-nothing approach. Room must be made for political, ethnic and religious minorities, as well as for different regions, so that they need not choose between absence from political life and recourse to armed violence.

Finally, the importance of good governance cannot be overemphasized. Good governance covers several aspects: the exploitation of resources to the benefit of all and not for the enrichment of a small group; the sound management of public finances so as to provide basic services to the entire population; anti-corruption measures; administration in the general interest and not solely in the interest of those in government; and the accountability of leaders. As many examples to the contrary have shown, good governance makes it possible to reduce the risks of conflict arising from shortages, the seizure of power or the effects of a culture of predation.

In addition to addressing causes, it is also necessary to remove the sources of the funding, fuelling and unleashing of conflicts. The international community has become increasingly aware of the need to combat the illegal exploitation of and traffic in natural resources, as well as the production of and traffic in drugs. Armed conflicts are triggered and perpetuated all the more easily if they can be financed by the illegal exploitation of and trade in natural resources, in particular diamonds, which are easy to dispose of and whose origins are difficult to identify, as well as drugs.

The market needs to be regulated so as to abolish illicit trafficking and to increase the transparency of transactions. This involves enhancing cooperation between States, marketing centres, industrialists and regional organizations. It also requires support for the efforts of producer States to enhance their regulations and their means to stop illicit trafficking. Lastly, it involves consideration of how to certify rough diamonds, define codes of conduct for industrialists and establish an international agency responsible for promoting transparency and responsibility.

I will not dwell on the problem of drug trafficking, the extent and complexity of which are well known. I would simply point out that certain conflicts, in particular that in Afghanistan, persist as a result of this sole but very lucrative resource. This explains the great importance of preventive action in that area.

We must also take action against the destabilizing stockpiling of and illicit trafficking in light and small-calibre weapons. Crises degenerate all the more easily into armed conflicts when weapons, in particular light and small-calibre weapons, are readily accessible. Coordinated action in this sphere is an essential aspect of preventing armed conflict.

I am pleased to note that the international community has increasingly mobilized itself in this respect. The sale of light and small-calibre weapons must be regulated so that their transfer at the national, regional and international levels is conducted legally and responsibly. In practice, this requires an entire range of measures: the strengthening of national laws; the development of regional initiatives, such as, for instance, the moratorium imposed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Nairobi Declaration, the action programme conducted jointly by the European Union and the Southern

African Development Community, and the Inter-American Convention of the Organization of American States (OAS); the exchange of information on trafficking; the marking of weapons; anti-trafficking measures; international cooperation to increase the monitoring capacity of States directly affected by the illicit traffic in small arms; the drafting of a protocol on the manufacture of and illicit traffic in firearms; and a reduction in the destabilizing stockpiling of small arms, in particular through the adoption of confidence-building measures and through the collection and destruction of all weapons not legally owned or not necessary to national or community defence or to internal security.

For its part, the European Union is highly sensitive to this problem and has adopted a Code of Conduct on arms exports and a Joint Action on small arms. In this context, the European Union is obviously lending its full support to the convening in 2001 of a United Nations conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects.

Beyond the responsibility of States, regional organizations have an important role in the prevention of conflicts. Regional organizations may and should, first, have political and diplomatic machinery for preventing conflicts. Such is the role played by such continental organizations as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OAS and the Organization of African Unity, as well as by such subregional organizations as, for instance, ECOWAS in West Africa. They represent the first level for addressing tensions that are mostly of a regional nature and for finding solutions among all the forces directly involved, while ensuring that internal crises and tensions do not draw the countries of a given region into the problem alongside the local protagonists.

We should draw conclusions from the conflict-prevention actions already undertaken by regional organizations so that their role can be enhanced and strengthened. Moreover, the emergence of such organizations where they do not already exist should be encouraged. These regional cooperation agencies are also crucibles in which links of solidarity are formed and economic integration is developed, enabling them to play a preventive role.

The European Union is itself a successful model of conflict prevention. After two world wars unleashed in Europe, the Union arose in the belief that it was necessary to create common economic interests to prevent the resurgence of conflicts and that every country should have sufficient interest in and with its neighbours to make war impossible. Indeed, after centuries of tearing one another apart, the States members of the European Union have lived in peace for over half a century. The lesson to be drawn from this European success story is that it is better to share and jointly exploit resources than to pillage one's neighbours. The lesson holds good in particular for problems of access to and distribution of water resources, which have become increasingly vital.

We can only rejoice that this path has been chosen by regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

Finally, what is the role of the United Nations and what are the means at its disposal for the prevention of armed conflict? Bearing in mind the diversity of the questions dealt with in the context of conflict prevention, many United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes have a role to play. In this Security Council debate, I will concentrate on the role of the Council.

The main responsibility of the Security Council for peacekeeping and security also extends to the prevention of armed conflict. It falls to it to investigate any dispute or situation to determine whether that dispute or situation could degenerate into armed conflict and to take appropriate measures. The Council must assume that responsibility in full, taking into account the change in the nature of conflicts, 90 per cent of which now take place within States. Its effectiveness will be also be improved if greater account is taken of that dimension.

In this context, we should remind ourselves of the role of the Secretary-General in alerting the Security Council in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter. The Secretary-General must not hesitate to draw the Security Council's attention to certain situations. The Secretariat's early-warning, reaction and analysis capabilities should therefore be bolstered so that the Secretary-General is better able to perform that task.

I should like to emphasize that particular aspect of our message. The Security Council has at its disposal a range of resources, of which it must avail itself as necessary. I should like to mention a few of them. They include Security Council missions, of

which there has been a welcome revival recently, and which we must be able to send not only when conflict breaks out, but further down the line; preventive disarmament measures and arms embargoes for preventive purposes; measures to combat illegal trafficking in mineral raw materials and embargoes on diamonds; the establishment of demilitarized zones; and measures for preventive deployment, including civilian police. The Security Council must progressively develop all of these measures.

In conclusion, we are gratified to see the Security Council becoming increasingly aware of the importance of preventive action. This new interest must now be translated into action and decision-making. Beyond the Council, the entire international community, United Nations specialized bodies and agencies, regional organizations and Member States must develop that dimension more effectively and acquire a culture of prevention. Furthermore, an integrated approach is also essential, extending from the prevention of conflict to the consolidation of peace after conflict, so as to break the vicious cycle of unavoidable conflict and unachievable peace.

It is for the Security Council to implement the recommendations made here today in specific cases. This topic warrants greater, sustained attention. It would therefore be useful for the Secretary-General to give us his views and recommendations on the matter, as requested in the draft presidential statement to be adopted later, and for the Security Council to examine them in due course, if possible at ministerial level.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on conflict prevention, and for providing us with the opportunity to present our views on this important issue. This meeting is a further testimony to the importance which the Security Council attaches to conflict prevention in the maintenance of world peace and security.

Considering the cost of armed conflict in terms of human suffering and material destruction, not to mention of post-conflict national rehabilitation and reconstruction, the importance of resolving a dispute before it escalates into a conflict is all too obvious.

The Government of Japan believes that the international community should address situations of potential conflict by taking a comprehensive approach that combines political, economic, social and humanitarian measures, taking into account the specific requirements of the situation. We consider it particularly important to try to eliminate the root causes of conflict through measures to alleviate poverty, while utilizing an early-warning system in order to detect possible conflicts.

In the context of conflict prevention, I would also like to emphasize the importance of post-conflict peace-building efforts aimed at preventing the recurrence of conflicts, for it has been shown that conflicts recur in approximately 60 per cent of cases. To provide assistance for disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of former soldiers, in addition to the deployment of peacekeeping personnel, is vitally important at the post-conflict stage.

The meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Group of Eight, which Japan chaired on 12 and 13 July, emphasized the importance of nourishing a culture of prevention. As described in the Miyazaki initiatives for conflict prevention, which was adopted at that meeting, the Group of Eight Foreign Ministers focused on a range of issues, including the question of small arms and light weapons, the relationship between conflict and development, the need to restrict the illicit trade in diamonds, the protection of children in armed conflict and the role of civilian police in conflict prevention. I note that many of these points are underlined in the presidential statement which will be issued today.

The Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, could play a more positive role in conflict prevention, particularly in detecting potential conflict situations. So could the Secretary-General, particularly in bringing potentially violent situations to the attention of the Security Council and, thereby, to that of the international community. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's report in preparation for the Millennium Assembly (A/54/2000) in which he advocates a more active United Nations role in this regard. In a similar vein, we look forward to receiving the report of an expert panel established by the Secretary-General to review peace operations.

Needless to say, various other actors, including the conflicting parties themselves and interested States,

governmental and non-governmental organizations, other regional organizations and frameworks for dialogue such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), have an essential part to play in the prevention of conflicts. Encouraging these actors to coordinate their efforts is also an increasingly important task before the Security Council.

For its part, the Government of Japan has been taking a number of initiatives with a view to fostering the culture of prevention. For example, Japan has hosted a series of international conferences on such subjects as the role of non-governmental organizations in conflict prevention and the implications of conflict prevention for African development.

Japan has also contributed to date $1.2 million to the OAU Peace Fund at the United Nations, with the aim of helping to develop a regional mechanism for conflict prevention. Of that amount, approximately $200,000 is earmarked to support OAU efforts to develop an early warning system in Africa.

Japan has also been active in tackling the issue of small arms and light weapons and has sponsored a General Assembly resolution on the subject in past years. Japan's contributions to the United Nations trust fund for the purposes of preventing the illegal transfer of weapons and reducing the number of small arms in post-conflict zones amount to $2 million. And, in an effort to contribute to the success of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects to be held in 2001, Japan recently organized a preparatory workshop in Tokyo, in which representatives from countries throughout Asia and other regions participated.

Conflict prevention is a very important but difficult task. We, therefore, as the Member States of the United Nations, have to work together, keeping in mind the responsibility of the United Nations and particularly of the Security Council for preserving world peace.

I wish to assure you, Mr. President, that Japan will spare no effort in the endeavour to tackle this difficult challenge of conflict prevention.

The President: The next speaker inscribed in my list is the representative of Austria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I have the honour to speak in Austria's capacity as Chair in Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE.

At the outset, permit me to thank the Jamaican presidency for scheduling this open debate. The presence of the Jamaican Foreign Minister clearly expresses the importance of the topic and the need to thoroughly discuss the various issues.

I would also like to thank you for giving me the floor to address the Council on the issue of conflict prevention as representative of the Chairperson in Office of the OSCE. The OSCE itself was created as a means of conflict prevention during the cold war, as a standing conference to de-escalate the bipolar political tensions in Europe. This year we commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signature of the Helsinki Final Act, the basic document in post-war Europe that set the parameters for a dialogue across the iron curtain, a dialogue which contributed significantly to the reduction of mistrust and facilitated the political developments in and after 1989, including the peaceful changes of international borders.

The OSCE was not able to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict in some cases, most notably in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. However, the organization has learned its lessons and adopted a multifaceted approach to conflict prevention. In order to address the root causes of conflict, it established the Center for Conflict Prevention in Vienna and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw and instituted the High Commissioner for Minorities and the Representative for the Freedom of the Media. In addition, very useful work in conflict prevention is done by the field missions in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania, Georgia, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Moldova and Tajikistan.

In addressing the OSCE's role in conflict prevention at the ceremony in Vienna yesterday commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the Chairperson in Office, Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, elaborated general principles which could also be of relevance to the United Nations, in particular to the Security Council, the main United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. These elements are the indivisibility and

universality of security, the need for a culture of dialogue, the importance of respect for human rights, flexibility of the organization, international cooperation and effectiveness of measures.

First, the indivisibility and universality of security. As our distinguished President, the Foreign Minister of Jamaica, has just underlined, the need for security is the same all over the world; armed conflicts cause human suffering everywhere without distinction. In order to assume its role as the world's guardian of international peace, the Security Council must treat all potential conflicts the same and must devote equal attention to all crises in every region of the world.

Second, a culture of dialogue. Peaceful international relations require respect for the principle of equality of States and the will of the States to cooperate peacefully with one another. Together with the Secretary-General, the Security Council must continue to enhance the United Nations role as a facilitator of dialogue and negotiations, both in international and in internal conflicts. As a consequence, any illegal resort to the use of force must effectively be sanctioned immediately.

Third, the role of human rights. Recent history has demonstrated the crucial role of human rights, the rights of minorities, and humanitarian law in conflict prevention. In a time when 90 per cent of armed conflicts are internal, safeguarding these rights is an inevitable prerequisite for peace. Human rights violations are often early warning signs of tensions. In this respect the Security Council has undertaken significant efforts and must continue to do so in order to effectively prevent conflicts.

Fourth, flexibility. Today's conflicts are significantly different from those which the drafters of the United Nations Charter had in mind. Equally, the challenges for world peace and stability and the potential root causes of conflict are of a different nature. Poverty, organized crime, drugs, terrorism, disease, the availability of large numbers of small arms and the scarcity of natural resources require adequate attention and a variety of different responses in preventive diplomacy. The OSCE has tried over the past years to adapt institutionally and functionally to the new situation. The Security Council has also adopted innovative procedures and initiatives. Let me just mention the establishment of the criminal tribunals, the recent prohibition of trade in "blood diamonds" and the equally recent reaction to the threat caused by the spread of AIDS.

Other possible means of action come to mind, such as investigative missions to identify potential conflicts, special hearings of the parties involved, preventive arms or trade embargoes, preventive partial disarmament of the parties involved and the creation of demilitarized zones.

Fifthly, as regards international cooperation, recent examples have shown that conflict prevention is an enormous task that no international organization can solve on its own. Cooperation between international organizations, including non-governmental organizations, must become the norm. In the Istanbul Charter for European Security, the OSCE clearly supported the notion that only a sensible distribution of tasks could maximize the profit of our endeavours. The Security Council would be well advised to continue its policy of actively involving regional organizations and possibly expand it to other international forums.

My sixth and final point concerns effectiveness. It is clear that attempts to prevent conflicts will only be effective if the organizations are adequately equipped for their tasks. Successful prevention requires mechanisms to identify potential conflicts, a variety of instruments of prevention, including appropriate means to counter non-compliance by the parties and organizational structures, especially adequate personnel and financial means. Most important, however, as we all know, is the full political support by the member States of the organization.

The United Nations, the regional organizations and States must invest more effort, time and money in conflict prevention. Considering the costs of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, in terms of human suffering as well as financial and operational means, the investment in conflict prevention may be the most economic and rational investment of all.

The President: I thank the representative of Austria for his kind words addressed to me.

There are a number of speakers remaining on my list, but in view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of Council Members, I intend to suspend the meeting now.